

## "The Peace From Prayer," Philippians 4:6-8 – Thursday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- The title I chose for tonight's topical teaching is "The Peace From Prayer." Last week's teaching was "The Power of Prayer."
- Our text will be Philippians 4:6-8, and as you're turning there, I'll let you know that next Thursday, we'll have a prayer meeting.
- It is my hope and prayer that after this first prayer meeting, we will also begin having an all church monthly prayer meeting.

Philippians 4:6–8 (NKJV) — 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

- I have to confess that while God is working in my life concerning worry and fear, this is an area I still personally struggle with.
- If you're anything like me in this regard and I suspect many of you are it's greatly encouraging to know we're in good company.
- Replete throughout the pages of scripture, men and women of God, who were mightily used by God, were themselves fearful.

Joshua 1:5–9 (NKJV) — 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

- Joshua is just one of many examples of fear and one lacking courage, even to the point of giving way to dismay and despair.
- But God both strengthens and encourages Joshua to not be afraid and instead be in the Word, meditating on it day and night.
- This because, faith from which courage and strength come, is the antithesis of fear and faith comes by way of the Word of God.

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) — 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- I am keenly aware this could be seen as an oversimplification, but it comes down to two things, the Word of God and prayer.
- The best illustration I ever heard concerning this is that of a phone; the earphone is God's Word and the microphone is prayer.
- Prayer is more of a dialogue than a monologue. In other words, I talk to God through prayer, He responds through His Word.

- The reason I wanted to take the time to go into all this is that there's an inseparable connection between the Word and prayer.
- Enter the text before us in which the Apostle Paul links the peace of God to prayer to God and meditating on the Word of God.
- What follows are three important yet simple truths as it relates to the peace that comes by way of prayer and the Word of God.

- The first one is to simply pray about everything, meaning everything that concerns you, burdens you and creates anxiety in you.

1 Peter 5:7 (NKJV) — 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Psalm 62:8 (NKJV) — 8 Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

- The second one is to thank God for anything, meaning anything you can think of that you're thankful for whether big or small.

Psalm 9:1 (NKJV) — 1 I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.

Colossians 3:17 (NKJV) — 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Psalm 95:2–3 (NKJV) — 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 3 For the LORD is the great God, And the great King above all gods.

Ephesians 1:16 (NKJV) — 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

- The third is a result of the first two, in that, if you pray about everything, and thank Him for anything, you'll worry about nothing.
- In other words, once you've cast all of your fears and anxieties on Him, thanking Him for anything, worry is replaced with peace.
- It's interesting to note that this peace surpasses, even bypasses our human understanding keeping our hearts and minds calm.

Charles Spurgeon - "What is God's peace? The unruffled serenity of the infinitely-happy God, the eternal composure of the absolutely well-contented God."

Adam Clarke of this place of peace describes it as that which, "Shall keep them as in a strong place or a castle."

- It doesn't stop at praying about everything, thanking Him for anything so I'll worry about nothing, Paul takes it one step further.
- Once our hearts and minds are calm and at peace, we need to fill our minds and even renew our minds with the Word of God.
- Specifically, that of meditating on that which is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of a good report and anything that is praiseworthy.

In 2 Corinthians 10:5b Paul refers to this as "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,"

- One of the most powerful passages in scripture concerning taking every worrying thought captive to Christ is in Matthew six.

Matthew 6:25–34 (NKJV) — 25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

- What Jesus is teaching here is that our heavenly Father will provide for us, because of the infinite value that He places on us.
- If He will feed and clothe birds and flowers, which are less valuable than us, then how much more will both feed and clothe us.
- In other words, life is more of a value than food, the body more than clothes, and His children more than both birds and flowers.

I think this poem says it best this way, “Said the robin to the sparrow, ‘I should really like to know -- Why these anxious human beings rush about and worry so.’ -- Said the sparrow to the robin, ‘Friend, I think that it must be -- That they have no Heavenly Father, such as cares for you and me.’”

- Here’s the bottom line, the Savior is saying that worry and fear are inconsistent with the character and nature of Who God is.
- As such, worry is unnecessary because we have a loving heavenly Father that will take care of and provide for our every need.
- When we don’t ask of, nor trust in, our heavenly Father to do this, our hearts will be filled with fear and worry instead of peace.

- Over the years I’ve collected some great quotes that speak to what worry can do to those given over to it:
- “Worry is like a rocking chair; you go back and forth, but won’t get anywhere.”
- “Worry is the interest we pay on tomorrow’s troubles.”
- “Worry pulls tomorrow’s cloud over today’s sunshine.”
- “Worry gives a small thing a big shadow.”

In closing, I’d like to share a story that I to me really sums up the simple truth of the cure for worry and the peace that comes from prayer. Years ago, in the pioneer days of aviation, a pilot was making a flight around the world. After he had gone for some two hours from his last landing field, he heard a noise in his plane, which he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. He realized that while his plane had been on the ground a rat had gotten in. For all he knew the rat could be gnawing through a vital cable or control of the plane. He was both worried and fearful. At first he did not know what to do. It was two hours back to the landing field from which he had taken off and more than two hours to the next field ahead. Then he remembered that the rat is a rodent. It is not made for the heights; it is made to live on the ground and under the ground. Therefore the pilot began to climb. He went up a thousand feet, then another thousand and another until he was more than twenty thousand feet up. The gnawing ceased. The rat was dead. He could not survive in the atmosphere of those heights. More than two hours later the pilot brought the plane safely to the next landing and found the dead rat. Worrying about tomorrow is a rodent. It cannot live in the secret place of the Most High. It cannot breathe in the atmosphere made vital by prayer and familiarity with the Scripture. Our concerns for tomorrow die when we ascend to the Lord through prayer and His Word.